

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 AID-05 AGRE-00 COME-00 EB-08 /074 W
-----086528 050846Z /11

R 041601Z NOV 77
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9867
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
USCINCSO
USCINCLANT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 CARACAS 10776

EO 11652 GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, EAGR, ASEC, SOCI, VE
SUBJ: THIS WEEK IN VENEZUELA
REF: CARACAS 10540(NOTAL)
SUMMARY: PROBLEMS IN ANZOATEGUI- YOUNG MEMBER OF SOCIALIST
LEAGUE KILLED BY POLICE AND ANOTHER SHOOTOUT AT KM 52.
VENEZUELA WILL NOT IMPORT CORN IN 1978 DUE TO RECORD HARVEST.
RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN.
TRIAL OF ORLANDO BOSCH TO PROCEED. CARACAS WATER
SHORTAGE CAUSES SCHOOL CLOSINGS AND LIMITED RIOT.

1. PROBLEMS IN ANZOATEGUI- YOUNG MEMBER OF SOCIALIST
LEAGUE KILLED BY POLICE/ ANOTHER SHOOTOUT AT KM 52
ON NOV 1, A 17YEAR OLD MEMBER OF THE SOCIALIST
LEAGUE" (LS), ENRIQUE RODRIGUEZ FIGUEROA, WAS SHOT TO DEATH
BY TWO NATIONAL GUARDSMEN IN PUERTO LA CRUZ, ANZOATEGUI, AS HE
WAS PAINTING WALL SIGNS CELEBRATING THE FORTH ANNIVER-
SARY OF THE CREATION OF THE LAS AND CONEMNING THE FORTH-
COMING VISIT TO VENEZUELA BY PRESIDENT CARTER. LS
SPOKESMEN CONDEMNED THE KILLING AS A COLD-BLOODED
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ASSASSINATION AND SAID IT DEMONSTRATED THAT THE GOV
HAS UNDERTAKEN AN ACTIVE CAMPAIGN OF REPRESSION AGAINST
"POPULAR FORCES." THE TWO GUARDSMEN HAVE BEEN PLACED
UNDER ARREST BY THEIR SUPERVISOR PENDING A FULL INVESTI-
GATION. THE PREVIOUS DAY, FOUR ARMED PERSONS IN A JEEP
FIRED A MACHINE-GUN AT THE NATIONAL GUARD POST KM 52,
SOUTH OF BARCELONA, THE POST WHERE TWO BANDERA ROJA

INSURGENTS DIED IN A SHOOTOUT OCT 10.

COMMENT: THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING RODRIGUEZ' DEATH ARE NOT CLEAR. IT IS THE FIRST REPORTED DEATH OF A LEFTIST MILITANT AT THE HANDS OF VENEZUELAN SECURITY AUTHORITIES SINCE THE KILLING OF THE LS' SECRETARY GENERAL JORGE RODRIGUEZ IN JULY, 1976 BY DISIP AGENTS, AND PROVIDES ANOTHER POTENTIAL MARTYR FOR THE LS.

2. NO CORN IMPORTS IN 1978.

LUIS AUGUSTO VEGAS BENEDETTI, PRESIDENT OF THE AGRICULTURAL MARKETING CORPORATION, ANNOUNCED LAST WEEK THAT VENEZUELA WILL NOT NEED TO IMPORT CORN IN 1978. AN EXCEPTIONALLY GOOD HARVEST THIS YEAR OF ABOUT ONE MILLION TONS IS NOW FORECAST.

LAST YEAR VENEZUELA PRODUCED ABOUT ONE-HALF MILLION TONS OF CORN AND IMPORTED ONE-HALF MILLION TONS, NEARLY ALL OF IT FROM SOUTH AFRICA. ALTHOUGH PRESIDENT PEREZ ANNOUNCED LAST DECEMBER THAT VENEZUELA WOULD NO LONGER IMPORT WHITE CORN FROM SOUTH AFRICA, IMPORTS HAVE CONTINUED BY WAY OF MOZAMBIQUE. AT PRESENT, TRADE SOURCES SAY THERE ARE 140,000 TONS OF CORN IN VESSELS WAITING IN THE HARBOR TO BE UNLOADED. ALSO, 300,000 TONS WERE PURCHASED PREVIOUSLY BY THE AGRICULTURAL MARKETING CORPORATION FOR DELIVERY IN FEB 1978. THESE CONTRACTS RECENTLY WERE AMENDED FOR DELIVERY IN APRIL 1978.

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3. THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CAPAIGN.

DURING AN OCT 27 PRESS INTERVIEW, THE PRESIDENT CALLED ON ALL POLITICAL PARTIES TO REACH AN AGREEMENT FOR CONSCIENTIOUS DEBATE OF CAMPAIGN ISSUES IN ORDER TO "STRENGTHEN VENEZUELAN DEMOCRACY." COPEI CHALLENGER SENATOR LUIS HERRERA CAMPINS, RESPONDED THE NEXT DAY BY PRAISING PEREZ' APPEAL BUT NOTED SUCH AN AGREEMENT DID NOT MEAN AN END TO DEBATE AND POLEMICS, BUT RATHER A CALL TO MAINTAIN DEBATE ON A HIGH LEVEL. AD CANDIDATE LUIS PINERUA ORDAZ AGREED THAT THE CAMPAIGN SHOULD NOT DEGENERATE INTO NAME CALLING. HE ALSO NOTED THE SLIM POSSIBILITY THAT AD WOULD CALL UPON COPEI TO FORM A COALITION GOVT.

COMMENT: DURING THE LAST TWO MONTHS THE MAJOR PARTY CANDIDATES HAVE BEEN BALSTING AWAY AT EACH OTHER; HERRERA CAMPINS CHARGING THAT PINERUA ORDAZ CANNOT SEPARATE HIMSELF FROM THE FAILURES OF THE PEREZ ADMINISTRATION, THE AD CANDIDATE VIGOROUSLY ATTACKING THE DO-NOTHING ADMINISTRATION OF FORMER PRESIDENT CALDERA. SINCE THE OFFICIAL CAMPAIGN DOES NOT START UNTIL APRIL, AND NEITHER PARTY HAS YET ANNOUNCED ITS

FINAL PLATFORM, SUCH PERSONAL ATTACKS ARE NOT UNEXPECTED.
FURTHER, EVEN THE GROUND RULES FOR THIS PERIOD OF
OFFICIAL NON-ACTIVITY HAVE NOT YET BEEN DECIDED BY THE
SUPREME ELECTORAL CUNCIL. THE CAMPAIGN SO FAR HAS
HAD A SOMEWHAT UNREAL AIR. PEREZ' CALL FOR A LITTLE
REFLECTION WAS APPARENTLY WELCOMED BY BOTH MAJOR
CANDIDATES. THIS IS OF COURSE MERELY A RESPITE SINCE
THE CUNTRY HAS THIRTEEN MONTHS TO GO BEFORE THE
ELECTION.

4. TRIAL OF BOSCH TO PROCEED.
THE SUPREME COURT ON OCT 27 DECLINED TO REPLY TO A
QUERY OF THE FISCAL GENERAL CONCERNING WHETHER ORLANDO
BOSCH AND THE OTHER DEFENDANTS ACCUSED OF THE CUBANA
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AILINER BOMBING SHOULD STAND TRIAL IN A CIVIL OR
MILITARY COURT. THE SUPREME COURT SAID IT COULD ONLY
RESPOND TO QUERIES PUT TO IT BY OTHER COURTS. JUSTICE
MINISTER TOLD EMBASSY PRIVATELY THAT THIS DECISON

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USIA-06 AID-05 EB-08 COME-00 AGRE-00 /074 W
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R 041601Z NOV 77
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 CARACAS 10776

ALLOWS TRIAL OF BOSCH AND OTHERS TO PROCEED IN THE

MILITARY TRIBUNAL. THE GOV IS PLEASED AND HOPES TO
MANAGE THE TIMING OF TRIAL SO THAT IT DOES NOT BECOME
A FACTOR IN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN.
COMMENT: IF THE GOV SCENARIO HOLDS, THIS MEANS NO
DECISION ON THIS CASE SHOULD BE EXPECTED UNTIL AT LEAST
JANUARY 1979. END COMMENT.

5. CARACAS WATER SHORTAGE CAUSES SCHOOL CLOSINGS AND
RIOTS.

DURING AN ELECTRICAL POWER FAILURE OCTOBER 31, ONE OF THE
MAIN WATER PUMPING STATIONS FOR THE METROPOLITAN AREA
OF CARACAS CAUGHT FIRE AND WAS TOTALLY DESTROYED.
THE LOSS OF THIS PUMPING STATION CUT THE CITY'S WATER
SUPPLY BY 60PCT. AUTHORITIES HAVE PROJECTED NOVEMBER 10
AS THE COMPLETION DATE FOR THE REPAIRS AT THE PUMPING
STATION. UNTIL THAT TIME WATER THROUGHOUT THE CITY IS
BEING RATIONED. THE NATIONAL WATER INSTITUTE ACKNOWLEDGED
ON NOVEMBER 4 THAT THE RATIONING WAS NOT GOING ACCORDING
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TO PLAN AND THAT SOME SECTORS HAVE BEEN WITHOUT
WATER FOR A WEEK. THE SITUATION IS SO SEVERE THAT THE
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION ANNOUNCED THE CLOSING OF ALL
SCHOOLS UNTIL WATER SUPPLY NORMALIZES. ON NOVEMBER 3,
RESIDENTS OF THE 23 OF JANUARY BARRIO WHO HAVE BEEN
WITHOUT WATER FOR THE WEEK RIOTED AND POLICE REPORTEDLY
SHOT TWO STUDENTS. THERE ARE ALSO REPORTS THAT HOSPITALS
ARE TURNING AWAY PATIENTS DUE TO LACK OF WATER.

6. OTHER REPORTING THIS WEEK INCLUDED SCHEDULED CONFERENCE
IN NICARAGUA (CARACAS 10563), PRESIDENT PEREZ' VISIT TO
BRAZIL AND NUCLEAR ENERGY (CARACAS 10608), VENEZUELA DECIDES
NOT TO ATTEND THE CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN ARMIES IN NICARAGUA
(CARACAS 10641), ALLEGED VENEZUELAN PLOT AGAINST SOMOZA
(CARACAS 10910), ENERGY (CERP); PETROLEUM INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT
AND OUTLOOK (CARACAS A-148), AND COUNTRY COMMERCIAL PROGRAM-
4TH QUARTER AND YEAR-END REPORT FY 77 (CARACAS 10567).
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